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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, September 25. 1694.

Queſt. 1. *Does a peeviſh Ill Humour in any perſon proceed from Ambition, Envy or Diſcontent?*

Anſw. The Two laſt will certainly produce ſomething of it, and very often the firſt: The Ill Nature generally proceeds from Pride, and a too good Opinion of our ſelves.

Queſt. 2. *My Father contracts a great many Debts, of which ſome part in my Education, and dyes: Now by Law I am not oblig'd to the payment of one Farthing; however I willingly engag'd for the payment of as much, or more than my Education coſt; there is yet a great Sum behind, and I think I have diſcharged my Duty; and in truth, I cannot do more without ſelling the beſt part of the Eſtate; and if I do that, I ſhall deprive my ſelf of a Subſiſtence: Now I would fain know how far one may be oblig'd,* in Foro Conſcientiæ, *in ſuch a caſe. This, with your Advice and Opinion on the whole, I earneſtly beg.*

Anſw. Juſtice obliges us to repay ſuch Debts as we contract our ſelves, or which ſhall reaſonably be contracted upon our Accounts; but we are no ways engaged to anſwer for all the Extravagancies of our Predeceſſors; what we do in that caſe is left to our goodneſs; But thoſe that are in a condition to pay ſuch Debts, or part of 'em, without any prejudice to themſelves or Families, would do very well to diſcharge them, ſince they are always a diſgrace to them.

Queſt. 3. *Is the Story of the* Syrens *a Fable or not? If it be not, I deſire you will give ſome Account what they were, where they dwelt, and in what Number they were, and what became of 'em. But if it be falſe, from whence it proceeded, and what Form they were ſuppos'd to be of?*

Anſw. There's no great doubt to be made but it was a Fiction of the Poets; and as to their Form, we ſhall not be very critical in determining it, ſince the Poets cou'd not agree upon it, but ſhall content our ſelves with relating the Account they have given of them. They make them to be the Daughters of a River. *Homer* ſays there was but Two of them, although ſome will have their Number to be Five. Nor is their Abode very well known; *Virgil* places them upon Rocks where Veſſels were often ſplit. *Pliny* will have them to dwell in the Promontory of *Minerva*, very near the Iſle of *Caprea*. Some have aſſigned them their Habitation in *Sicily*, hard by the Cape of *Pelorus*. They have given them Wings, and a Plume of very beautiful and various coloured Feathers. But *Ovid* makes Sea-Monſters of them, repreſents them with the Face of a Woman, and attributes an Human Voice to them. *Claudian* ſpeaks of them yet more fully; he ſays, they dwelt upon Harmonious Rocks, that they were charming Monſters, and pleaſant Rocks, where Voyagers were Shipwreckt without any Regret, and expired in the Enchantment, in the midſt of pleaſures.

Dulce Malum Pelago Siren, Volucreſque Puellæ:
Blanda pericla Maris, terror quoque gratus in undis.
Nec dolor ullus erat; Mortem dubat ipſa voluptas.

This Deſcription is without doubt founded upon the Litteral Explanation that has been made of the Fable; That they were Women which dwelt upon the borders of the *Sicilian* Sea, who by all manner of Voluptuous Attractives drew in and ſtopt the Paſſengers, and made them forget their intended Courſe, by affording them all ſorts of Delicacies and Pleaſures. Some even pretend that their Number and Name had their firſt Riſe from the Triple Pleaſure of the Sences, Wine, Love and Muſick, which are the moſt powerful Attractives to Men. And 'tis very probable that from thence proceeded ſo many Exhortations to ſhun the unhappy Song of the *Syrens*, and not to ſuffer themſelves to be enchanted by the ſweetneſs of their melody. Theſe are the terrible Rocks where Wisdom was ſhipwreckt. *Sirenes uſque in exitium dulces.* For the ſame Reaſon they have made 'em a Symbol of Eloquence, becauſe one cannot reſiſt the ſeducing of their Perſwaſive Diſcourſes. *Varo*, the Grammarian, was called, *Latina Siren*, the *Latin Syren*. Thus they have compared whatever flattered the Ear, or could engage the Heart, to the harmony, and melodious Voice of the *Syrens*. Wherefore the *Greeks* have taken the Etymology of the *Syrens* from the *Greek* Word σειρα, whice ſignifies a Chain: By which they meant, that it was impoſſible to diſengage our ſelves from their Links, and defend our ſelves from their invincible Charms.

Neither is their Deſtiny any better agreed upon than their Number or Form, &c. Some ſay, they were metamorphoſed into Rocks; which made ſome perſons, who were not over-curious to ſearch into the Fable, to maintain, That the *Syrens* were nothing elſe but certain places in the Sea, where Veſſels that went too near 'em were ſwallowed up; and, according to ſome Authors, there was no other ground for the Fable. Others pretend, that they were Birds Originally, and were turned into Fiſh; And theſe Two Conditions have been ſo little diſtinguiſhed, that Painters have repreſented them only under the beſt Form. In ſome Ancient Morals indeed they have appeared with the upper part like a Woman, and the lower part like a Bird. But thoſe that painted them like half Fiſhes, never thought of their firſt State, and have had no regard to that of their Metamorphoſe. Many of the Moderns fell into this Error, and went even ſo far as to believe the *Syrens* were not Fabulous. And ſince St. *Jerom* believed the *Fauns* and *Satyrs* true, 'tis not ſo ridiculous to give credit to the Relations we have of the *Tritons*, *Nereides* and *Syrens*: At leaſt if they were not formed by Nature, it cannot be doubted but they were truly in the Poets, who created them, and gave them their being.

Queſt. 4. *What is the beſt Argument to prove the Being of a God?*

Anſ. The Imperfection of Man, for had he had a ſufficient Power to have given himſelf Being, no doubt he wou'd have made himſelf compleat.

Queſt. 5. *Who writ the Book of the* Judges.

Anſw. There are various Opinions about its Author, ſome have thought it to be *Heſechias*, others *Eſdras*, and ſome again that it was a Collection of what each Judg had writ in particular of his own Life.

Queſt. 6. *I have for almoſt four years laſt paſt Courted a Young Gentlewoman, who hath always receiv'd me with great Reſpect, and before I had any Eſtate fallen to me, did, upon my Requeſt, refuſe very good Matches; I had about a year ago an Eſtate of* 400 l. per Annum *left me by a Friend; and lately another Friend Died and left me* 200 l. per Annum *more, upon condition,* That I never would Marry the beforemention'd Lady, but if I did, that Eſtate was to go to another. *Be pleas'd to underſtand that the Lady is not worth above* 200 l. Query, *Whether I ought to leave the* 200 l. per Annum, &c. *and take the Lady, or leave the Lady and take the Money.*

Anſ.

Anſw. Never doubt, Man, but take the Lady; a good Wife is worth your whole Eſtate: Beſides, you can neither in Conſcience or Gratitude forſake her, without you can either get her a better Husband than your ſelf, or are willing to part with ſo much of your Eſtate as will recompence her for what ſhe has loſt upon your account: neither can you, after all, diſpoſe of your ſelf without her conſent, if any Engagements have paſt between you, as probably there has. And then for your Miſtreſſes Fortune, we underſtand, that your Love is as little as that; and if her good Qualities will but merit your Eſtate, you may be pretty equally matcht.

Queſt. 7. *I have lately heard a Death-watch, and am verily afraid it is a warning for me ſoon to quit my Earthly Tenement: I am willing to go to Heaven, but before I think too ſeriouſly on't, I am deſirous to hear your Opinion, whether it gives but a ſhort or a long ſummons.*

Anſw. In this caſe, the ſooner the better; you can ne're be too well prepared for that Journey; nay, Twenty to One whether you have any time to make ready, if you don't always keep your account clear. But that we are unwilling to impede your courſe to Heaven, or we could tell you this Death-watch is nothing but a little Worm in the Wall, and that it preſages no more than many of the like Ridiculous Stories.

Queſt. 8. *In St.* Paul's *1ſt Epiſtle to the* Corinthians, *the* 3d Chapter, Verſe 17. *are theſe words,* He that defileth the Temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy: *pray the meaning on't.*

Anſw. See the latter part of the ſame Verſe; the *6th Chap.* 19*th Verſe*; and 2 *Cor.* 6. 16.

Queſt. 9. *The Ingenious Anſwers you have given to ſeveral Queſtions of Importance in Learning, have induced me to deſire your thoughts concerning the following Queries:*

Supposing Gravity to all (*as it really does*) indifferently, *at* different diſtances, *and making allowance for the* reſiſtance of the Air, *whether a projected Body* (*for Example a* Bomb) *deſcribes a* Geometrical, *or a* Mechanical Curve? *and if* Geometrical, *give us the Expreſſion of the Curve?*

Anſw. If there were no reſiſtance in the Air, a projected Body would move exactly in a *Parabola*; but allowing for the Reſiſtance of the Air, the Projectile deſcribes another *Curve*, which approaches to a kind of an *Hyperbola*, that has one of its *Aſſymptotes* perpendicular to the Plane of the *Horizon*: But we muſt beg the Queriſt's pardon, if we don't define exactly what the Nature of that Curve is, till 'tis a little better known in what proportion the Air reſiſts a Body that is more or leſs diſtant from the Surface of the Earth: We ſhall only add, that the Reſiſtance of the Air being accounted for, the Curve that is deſcribed does not differ much from a *Parabola*. For upon the Suppoſition of its being a *Parabola*, if we calculate the ſeveral diſtances to which a Mortar-Bullet may be ſhot, for the different inclinations of the *Mortar*, we ſhall find the Numbers very near what they are in *Practice*.

Advertiſement.

☞ THE Undertaker *of this Paper is Remov'd from the* Poultry, *to the* Raven *in* Iewen-Street, *where you may have Money for any* Library, *or* Parcel of Books; *as alſo* Entire Setts *of* Athenian Gazetts, *or ſingle* Mercuries, *to compleat Setts, and all other New Peices publiſht from time to time. Here is alſo Sold* Elixir Stomachium, *or the great Cordial* Elixir *for the Stomach.* —— This is further to give Notice, that all *Queſtions* ſent to the *Athenian Society*, muſt be now Directed to JOHN DUNTON, living at the place aforeſaid.

WAlter Lloyd at the *Antient Fowler* in *Tower-ſtreet, London*, Sells the Fineſt, Strongeſt Glaz'd, or not Glaz'd Gun-Powder, which by the Experience of ſeveral Perſons of Quality and others hath conſiderably out done any other Gun-powder yet made; the ſaid Strong Gun-powder, and all other ſorts of Gun-powder is Sold by him at very reaſonable Rates.

The Ready Money Adventurers

BEing deſirous that it ſhould be quite full, it is deferred to the 9th of *October* next, within which time it is not doubted but it will be quite full, by reaſon that moſt of the Books is already full, and the reſt is very near full: *The Tickets may be had of* Mr. *Harriſon*, at the *Hen and Chickens* in *Cheapſide*, Mr. *Clements* at the *Seven Stars* in *Newgate-ſtreet*, Mr. *Thriſcroſs* without *Ludgate*, Mr. *Hart* at the *Crown* near *Turnſtile* in *Holborn*, Mr. *Prince* over-againſt *Red Lyon-Court* in *Drury-lane*, Mr. *Roberts* at the *Green Dragon* near the *New Exchange in the Strand*, Mr. *Hooton* at the *Golden Boy* near *Charing Croſs*, Mr. *Coleman* over-againſt the *King's Brewhouſe* by the *Hermitage* near St. *Catharines*, Mr. *Amſon* at the *Ring* near *Salisbury-Court* in *Fleet-ſtreet*, Gold-ſmiths: At Mr. *Lloyds* Coffee-houſe in *Lombard-ſtreet*, Mr. *Brand* at the *Rain-bow Coffee-houſe*, the Corner of St. *Martins-lane*, *Charing-Croſs*, Mr. *Sanders* at the *Carliſle Coffee-houſe* in *Kings-ſtreet* near *Guild-hall*, Mr. *Dearles* at the *Dial* under St. *Dunſtan's Church* in *Fleet-ſtreet*, and at his Shop in *Weſtminſter-hall*. *It will be drawn at the* Muſick-Room *in* Charles-ſtreet, Covent-Garden.

The Sale of Sterling Plate,

WIll certainly be Drawn on the 29th of this Inſtant September *next, full or not full, in proportion to what is then full, at the Muſick-room in* Charles-ſtreet, Covent-garden, *begining preciſely at* 8 *of the clock in the Morning. Tickets may be had of Mr.* Bowman *at the* Flower-de-Luce, *near the* New-Exchange *in the* Strand, *Mr.* Cole *at the* Anchor *over-againſt St.* Dunſtan's-Church *in* Fleet-ſtreet, *Mr.* Foden *at the* Golden-Falcon *near* Fetter-lane-end *in* Holborn, *Mr.* Burningham *at the* Black-Raven *in* Newgate-ſtreet, *Mr.* Layfeild *at the* White-horſe *in* Lumbard-ſtreet, *Mr.* Barſham *at* Ratcliff-Croſs, *Mr.* de Cayne *at* Biſhops-gate, *Mr.* Holloway *at the* Cup *in* Leaden-hall-ſtreet *near* Ald-gate, *Mr.* Sykamore *at the* Star on *St.* Margaret's-Hill *in* Southwark, *Goldſmiths*, Mr. Ward *at the* Mere-maid *in* Cheap-ſide, *Mr.* Millner *in* Popes-head-Alley *near the* Royal-Exchange, *Mr.* Brindley *at the corner of* Fetter-lane *in* Fleetſtreet, *Mr.* Banes *Merchant in the City of* York, *Mr.* Smith *next* Bedford-gate *in* Charles-ſtreet Covent-Garden.

☞ IN Grays-Inn-lane in *Plow-yard*, the third Door, lives Dr. *Thomas Kirleus*, a Collegiate Phyſician, and Sworn Phyſician in Ordinary to King *Charles* the Second, until his death; who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Buſineſs) undertakes to cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Noſe, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurfs, Leproſies, and Venerial Diſeaſe, expecting nothing until the Cure be finiſhed: Of the laſt he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries the evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and ſo deſtroys many. The Drink is 3 *s.* the Quart, the Pill 1 *s.* a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanſe the Body of all Impurities, which are the cauſes of Dropſies, Gouts, Scurvies, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. Take heed whom you truſt in Phyſick, or it's become a *common Cheat* to profeſs it. He gives his Opinion to all that write or come, for nothing.

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